# Stop cop city RICO UPDATES #1



The Final Straw Radio - December 17, 2023

This week, we dig into the pre-trial hearings and jury selection for Ayla King, Stop Cop City movement's first and only co-defendant so far to be granted a speedy trial. We're joined by Silver, an on-the-ground correspondent among many in Atlanta focused on supporting the collective defense against the State of Georgia's RICO indictment. Stay tuned for future coverage of the trials as they unfold.

We will be focusing on the pretrial proceedings of defendant Ayla King, who has bravely flexed their right to a speedy trial and whose case we will be following more in-depth when opening arguments begin on January 10th. To help us unpack some of the media and legal intricacies in this case we will hear from Jewel, a North Carolina based lawyer (member of NLG Mass Defense) followed by an interview with Matt from Atlanta Community Press Collective. Jewel will help us understand some of the strategy of exercising a right to speedy trial while Matt will speak as one of the only members of local media to actively cover jury selection.

First, some background to this case for listeners less familiar:

On August 29th the State of Georgia filed an indictment against 61 people in the movement to Stop Cop City and defend Weelaunee people's park. The state alleges that music festival attendees and protestors engaged in racketeering, domestic terrorism, arson and money laundering—all as part of a so called mob conspiracy to halt construction of the massively unpopular expansion of police traning grounds in Southeast Atlanta—also known as Cop City.

This indictment follows a years-long, powerful and popular struggle against the city of Atlanta and their Police Foundation's attempts to build the 90 million dollar training grounds. The expansion of this site not only follows the widespread anti-police movements of 2020 but further bolsters US backed military training such the Georgia International Law Enforcement Exchange (aka GILEE) – a direct exhange program between Atlanta police and the Israeli Occupational Forces, who are currently waging genocide in the occupied Gaza strip of Palestine.

We have experienced the unrelenting and escalating criminal charges (such as domestic terrorism charges for so called trespassing on public land, racketeering charges for mutual aid), raids of collective organizing and healing spaces, and even the assassination of a beloved comrade, Tortuguita. Not only have these atrocities failed to stop the movement against Cop City, but they have inspired renewed resistance and solidarity from across the country and across the world.

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## **JEWEL ON SPEEDY TRIALS**

**Jewel:** Hi, my name is Jewel. I prefer He/Him pronouns. I am an attorney, and I also work with the National Lawyers Guild. I am based in North Carolina, where I mostly practice law.

TFSR: So, we're here to speak about the pursuit of speedy trial by some of the defendants in the RICO case brought by the US state of Georgia against people perceived to be a part of the movement to Stop Cop City or Defend the Atlanta Forest. Can you talk about what is the promise of a speedy trial per the US Constitution? And how does that pan out IRL? Also, how does that compare to when somebody asks for it in a Georgia State court?

Jewel: Yes. So just off top, I am not a Georgia attorney, so this really isn't legal advice—it's legal information. But, I'm really happy to be talking about this topic, because it can be very confusing. The speedy trial per the US Constitution, the 6th Amendment of the US Constitution, is essentially that if you are accused of a crime, if you're a defendant, you have the right to a speedy trial; your trial should be quick. The issue is how that actually pans out in real life. Like many of the US constitutional rights in the court, it's not a right that's automatic, you actually have to ask for it. So, there is this thing called the demand for speedy trial. Basically, the speedy trial right isn't considered until the defendant makes that demand. Every court is different, but usually it's just a piece of paper, or in the court in a hearing, saying "I want my trial, I want my trial now."

There are a lot of rules across different Federal circuits about how long is too long for a trial. Usually, after one year of waiting, there's this assumption—presumption—that you do have a right to speedy trial that's been violated. But, then there's all these other considerations that the courts need to consider—why it was delayed... During COVID that was like an excuse that was fine, right? "Oh, well, it's not the DA's fault. It's not the state's fault. It's not the defendants fault. It's just emergency situations." This also happened to my knowledge after Hurricane Katrina. A lot of trials just got stalled. But because it was going beyond anyone's control, a lot of the courts were saying "Well, no rights were violated, because... No

one's at fault." That's really like the idea of the speedy trial right federally in the US Constitution, which you can use in state court.

In Georgia, there is a Speedy Trial Statute. So, there's a law that the Georgia Legislature created to give this strong right to speedy trial. The difference with the Georgia speedy trial statutory right is that it has very specific rules. You have to demand speedy trial really quickly. Essentially, soon after you get indicted with a felony or accused of a misdemeanor, you have to ask for it very quickly. And, if you don't ask for it fast enough, based on these month terms, you can't ask for it any more in Georgia. The judges in Georgia have discretion to extend these deadlines. They can wait longer for you to make this demand for speedy trial. But, the reason why it's so tight is because if you make it timely, and they don't try your case within two of these terms, these like month periods, the case must be dismissed. So, it's a very strong right. It's a gamble, because you have to make the demand quickly. And if you win the gamble you get your case dismissed outright. If you lose the gamble, that means you have a trial that comes really quickly, so you just have to be prepared for it. That's basically like the two speedy trials that interrelate. But in the RICO cases in Georgia, it's the statutory speedy trial that's been on people's radar, but the constitutional speedy trial does apply too. It's not like forgotten or let go.

## TFSR: When you're talking about having to actually apply for the right, it's kind of like an asserting your Miranda Rights sort of thing?

Jewel: Yes, it's very formal and required. There's some constitutional rights that are so ingrained or whatever that the courts will assume you have them, you know, like property rights or even 1st Amendment rights. You don't have to say "I have the right to record," you can just record. But with the speedy trial right there's a strict requirement that you have to make that demand. And in fact, when the judge is considering your demand, they'll consider "Why did you wait so long to make that demand? If you really want speedy trial why didn't you demand for it months ago?" That is actually part of the evaluation that the court makes. But similarly to the Georgia gamble, after you make that speedy trial demand—constitutional speedy trial demand—you might get a trial really, really quickly, so you have to prepare for it. Or rather, your lawyer needs to be ready for it. So it is a gamble too. It's just like maybe you can wait a little bit longer to roll the dice.

#### TFSR: Can you talk about your legal experience since the 2020 uprising?

**Jewel:** Yeah, so I was all over the country in 2020. So I got to experience different uprisings, I would say. But my relationship with North Carolina is mostly in Charlotte, where the uprisings were, I would say, maybe more intense in many ways. And, I have been supporting getting cases dismissed that are still pending, getting cases clarified, getting cases expunged, eliminated. And so I've been able to like witness how the different 2020 cases have evolved and or been adjudicated, right? Disposed, people getting dismissals, people getting guilties, and they're still ongoing.

Here in North Carolina, in Charlotte, there was a public demand for these charges to be dropped. The district attorney did drop a lot of charges, hundreds of them, because there were so many. And so, I've been able to like relate to those charges in those ways. And now with these RICO cases in Georgia, it's important to remember that they claim that the so-called conspiracy began with the 2020 uprisings in Atlanta. So somehow, I've been saying these days that we're still somehow in the 2020 uprisings. At least with these cases in the courts the state really still thinks that we're there. And I think that's because it was such a shock to the state that people took to the streets and did uprisings. So you know, maybe they're really trying to quash it now.

TFSR: I mean, this gets into the area of speculation, but if they're trying to get into the idea that if this is a more nefarious, larger conspiracy than they can necessarily point at all the actors, then it makes sense to point to a larger event. But, it's just crazy that people are still, two and a half years later—their lives are on hold. If not damaged by pending charges, lost jobs, lost time in connection with people if they're still being held and they're not out on own recognizance. Like that seems like a huge imposition on the people.

Jewel: Yes, and if people remember from 2020, how arrests would happen. I mean, it was just like most of the arrests that the cops do, it was just grab and go, right? If you happen to be somewhere or near something, you would be grabbed, arrested, and charged. So even getting information about the cases is hard, because the cops don't have arrest record reports. The cops don't have reports of what happened because they were just so intense. They were so quick. They were so reckless in how they were behaving in these big uprisings. So even finding the cases is hard because there's not much to look at. And yes, we know that cops say there's no body cam or the body cam gets eliminated or disappears. Or, you know, suddenly there's no cop reports. So yeah, even confronting the cases has been hard because they were so messy to begin with.

TFSR: I guess it is, for as little as it sometimes seems to have an effect compared to... Yeah, in the US justice system, at least the burden of proof is on the state. The whole "innocent till proven guilty," when that actually in real life applies in a court situation... If we were in a situation where that was not the presumption, I could see it being a lot easier for a large kettled mass of people to just be trundled through the court system.

**Jewel:** Yeah, something that is really terrible, though, is that in the US legal system: to get arrested, all you need is probable cause. For people who have been paying attention to the RICO cases and the domestic terrorism cases in Georgia, it's clear that probable cause is so easy to meet. So unfortunately, you could have this "assault on a law enforcement officer," a violent accusation, on your record for years just because an officer believed that you did this. And so, although you do need beyond

a reasonable doubt to be proven guilty, and the state needs to prove that to get charged, for that charge to stay there for a while it doesn't take much, unfortunately. The same goes for grand juries. It's the same standard. It's probable cause, and the state can just present its own evidence in secret. Then the grand jury can indict you based on that very low standard with no defense. It's terrible because we know that the state acts politically. A lot of charges are political. They need such a low standard, and they can keep them with you, and torment you really, as the charges are pending.

TFSR: The state's legal strategy in a lot of this approach to the movement to Stop Cop City does seem to be one of stalling and a sort of death by 1000 cuts—by short circuiting collective defense, like we had seen successfully pulled off in the J20 case against protest during the Trump inauguration... By separating out defendants and restricting the legal defense, with their big cop loving budget. The state could easily draw out cases in order to ruin individual lives, to chill free speech in the meantime with long repression, and to drain collective methods of defense, such as lawyers willing to work pro bono [free].

But can you talk a bit about some of the reasons that defendants may want might want to pursue speedy trial approach and what some of the downsides might also be? Like you already mentioned how it comes really fast. So maybe if there's things that are unexpected, you wouldn't have a lot of time to prepare for them as being a potential downside, right?

**Jewel:** Yeah. So the benefits of a speedy trial situation are pretty common sense, right? You get your charge disposed faster, you can move on with your life, you can face your case sooner, you can deal with the evidence faster. But something that the state is doing is overburdening the defendants, right? Overburdening the movements, overburdening the nonprofits. They're really trying to stretch thin these these resources, these support systems. But, by doing that the state is also spreading itself thin.

In the RICO indictment, in Georgia, there's a lot of typos, there's a lot of legal inaccuracies, there's a lot of factual inaccuracies. There's dates that say 2022, when we believe they meant 2023—there's a lot of errors. And so just being realistic with what's going on, if you demand speedy trial you are facing a state that is not as prepared as it wants people to believe. There is so much evidence in these protest cases, as I described: in 2020, when there was these mass arrests, there's so many police officers, there's so many reports, there's so many body cams. And so just like it can take a long time for a defendant, a criminal defense attorney, to go through all that it takes a long time for the state, for the prosecutors for their assistants to handle all that information, and to keep it straight. So there is a very big benefit in the speedy trial gamble to do it, because you will be facing a state that is also less prepared. Even though their strategy, their tactic, is to make people feel scared, to make people feel powerless. The state has a lot of resources, but—and then some

people will say you're facing an infinitely resourced opponent. But these are also humans having to run this operation. And humans are very well known for making mistakes, not sleeping right, not saving files with the right names, not sending the right email... So with the speedy trial process, you do push the state, you squeeze it as well, because it is a defendant's right to hold. And in this gamble, the state has to move faster, right? The state is the one who has to put on the show in a criminal case. And then with that speed, they might mess up, and you might win faster, too. So there is like that speedy trial benefit.

Then just thinking about more movement, right? The benefits of a speedy trial is that in a movement, there are realistically people who are more vulnerable to convictions, or whose cases are a bit harder to defeat. And so in a speedy trial situation, for mass arrests or a mass indictment, the people who have less vulnerabilities, more confidence, more alibis, more defenses, could uplift the rest by them going first. And this was done in J20 strategically, and so there is this collective defense scenario where people can decide to go forward with their case faster to help the rest. Because after a full trial, and the officer says that the sky was blue, and then the next trial, they say the sky was black. Now you have a contradiction. And so the next trial might be a bit easier to win. Because then you have a record. You have a clear record of the situation.

Something that happens often in these mass arrest cases—being honest, what I've seen in the courtrooms is that officers lie, all the time. And officers actually are allowed to lie, when you get arrested, when you get interrogated. They're not supposed to lie in court, but they do it all the time. And so what you have is these officers who claim that they arrested you. And the defendant will say, "that wasn't who arrested me, I remember." But because they can say it, and there's no way to contradict them, they can get away with it and convict you. If an officer does that in a trial in a speedy trial scenario, they can't do it again, the next time, right? They can't claim they were in one point arresting you and then two minutes later over there arresting someone else. It just would be physically impossible. So yeah, so that's another benefit—you create a record that ties the state to a narrative. There's a lot of benefits, but they all relate to this idea of speed and quickness that could help the rest, could help the person a lot, and could really get people moving on with their lives.

But of course, you know, as I've mentioned many times, this is a gamble. And the gamble is that you are also having to move very quickly. You have to tie yourself up in a trial that could last couple of days, a couple of weeks, a couple of months, right? You have to be wherever the case is being heard. In the Georgia scenario, we know, we have seen, we have heard that the state has prosecuted people who are not from Georgia and decided to keep those cases prosecuted with domestic terrorism, with RICO. And now you're facing this reality of having to uproot yourself for a couple of weeks, maybe months, in speedy trial. Of course, the reality of the US legal system is that it's very hard for someone to navigate it without an attorney. It's almost impossible: the odds are so stacked against people without legal education. So, you also have an attorney that is going to have to prepare for your

case for your trial, a full trial, very quickly and perhaps not as well prepared as if the person had a couple of months to do so or a year even.

The other thing in Georgia that's really terrible and terrifying is that once you demand the speedy trial, you set up this calendar that is almost unstoppable. And so it doesn't matter if you didn't get your full evidence. It doesn't matter if you want to file all these motions in the future: you have to move now. And so what that means is that the days coming up for trial, you might get more evidence that you didn't know existed or forgot to remember, and the state can now present it in the trial against you. That's part of the gamble to that with the speed—you might be surprised by certain things, too.

And then, you know, like, you had mentioned the issue of resources. When you demand for speedy trial, suddenly you do have to spend money on an attorney and their time, and housing and transportation, and your networks, your support systems, do have to move to support a trial suddenly. I think trials in the US are so sensationalized that you also have to face the media, right? There's so many little things that a defendant has to deal with when they're on trial, and especially a highly publicized trial. So that's another of the downsides, right: the personal, the emotional, the psychological, the wildness of the court, and how unpredictable they are, especially in the South. And then, you know, another downside is that while you're in trial or waiting for it, other defendants might be getting offers, they might be getting discussions, they might be getting pleas as the trial develops. The state might start trying to get more cooperation and more snitches or indict other people. So there are some things that can happen beyond your control that could affect your outcome.

Like I said, it's a gamble—the reward is very, very high, the risks can be high. In the end, I think it is a very, very personal political choice. In these contexts, do I go forward with speedy trial based on what I know about my life, my situation, what they're claiming happen, what actually happened? Is this a risk that I can take? And should I? It's a personal decision that's informed by collective values. But it's not something to take lightly. Really, as you know, as you mentioned, with how these cases are held over people's heads, in the calculation, it's always considering how many years in prison could I face? What's the fines that they're talking about? What are they offering me as probation to get out of this? So yeah, it's it's a hard decision. But I do think that politically, and realistically, legally, it can be very, very beneficial for someone's life to do it and get it done with.

TFSR: But I see what you mean when, generally at least at the federal level, but I think this is across the board, prosecutors will tend to offer pretty piss-poor deals at the beginning because they want to catch someone, they want somebody to catch as many charges as possible. So they'll put up the largest possible negative outcome, and then sort of bid down from there. And you're competing against that, as opposed to the sort of attrition hitting the prosecutors, like after a case has gone has gone through for a while. And it turns out that they're not doing well, because their evidence isn't

standing up in court, then they'll offer like some sort of better deal. What you say definitely makes sense.

Does looking at other recent Georgia RICO cases and how they've been pursued tell us much about the use of trial length, the use of state resources and political approach towards prosecution? One can note distinctions between indictments where the evidence is plenty and visible—such as, obviously, the Trump example would be one that comes to mind where there's plenty of state officials who are willing to come forward and say, "Hey, I was approached," or "I was pressured to do these things"—versus the Stop Cop City RICO where the indictment led with an introduction to the history of the philosophy of anarchism and these wider claims that [Stop Cop City] is part of a wider conspiracy that included the masses of people that participated in the streets in protest of police brutality in 2020.

Jewel: Yes. Very oddly enough, in Fulton County, Georgia, there's three active RICO cases: the YSL cases (Young Thug is involved) that is currently on trial on RICO; the Trump election fraud cases that trials haven't begun but plea offers are coming out left and right and getting accepted; and then the Stop Cop City RICO case with their conspiracy allegations. So I do think there's a benefit in looking at the other cases, how they're playing out, and what evidence they have and what their theories are. The Stop Cop City RICO case is legally unfounded in many ways, factually very questionable. There are a lot of questions, whether this indictment even stands, legally doesn't have enough allegations to even stand in the court. There's a lot of issues with that. But in terms of length, I think that's like a very important thing. In the YSL case, the trial has been pending for a long time just because of how many accusations there are. And that's really the challenge with these RICO cases: that you have to prove a lot of little elements to get someone convicted, to get someone to be guilty. You know, it's not just, for example, having to prove that a person was there and that they threw a rock, right? That's an example. You have to prove that there was a criminal enterprise, and that they were a part of it, and that they were furthering the scheme, and that they threw the rock to further the scheme, and that they were part of this conspiracy, and that there's these underlying felonies, right? There's so many little elements. There's more than that that you have to prove to a jury just to prove that someone threw the rock as part of the conspiracy that they're alleging.

The Stop Cop City indictment is also very confusing, because it's not very clear: what they're saying the conspiracy is, what they're saying the criminal enterprise is, what all these little underlying felonies are. It seems to just be, as you mentioned, trying to criminalize ideologies, make anarchism and anarchy look like this very evil, terrible thing. So yeah, I mean, looking at the other cases can help navigate or understand what is going on with the Stop Cop City RICO cases.

I would say, though, that something that's very unique about the Stop Cop City RICO cases is how immensely political it is. And the fact that decentralized people, and people from all over the country, all over the world, respond

to a movement and take action, right? I mean, that's just how social movements work. And there are so many examples of these organic, social movements [about] a cause. For example, the anti-war movement against the Vietnam War, where it was a call to action, and people just responded. And they did it by themselves with their own individual consciousness and then as a collective. And so now, it's really terrible that the state is trying to criminalize this normal thing that happens all over the world all over human history, where people get upset at something, learn about it, and then they go take action against it without this very militaristic and top[-down] approach that perhaps the military has, perhaps the cops have. Where [those structures take action by] following instructions, and you do things following a chain of command and there's meetings and there's agendas. Versus a social movement that will mostly be very disorganized, honestly, decentralized with things happening on their own accord.

One of the big differences too, especially with the Trump RICO case, is that officials have recognized very publicly that there were email threads, and there were phone calls, and there were instructions. It was this top-bottom approach. It was this "do this, do that, don't do this, don't do that. We have this common goal in mind, we want to get Trump to stay elected, we want to keep him president," right? There was this plan in action that people moved with directions. That's not how social movements work. I mean, that's just not how they exist, how they evolve, and how they succeed. They succeed in decentralized fashions. So yeah, I think this indictment if analyzed by a social movements scholar, they would be very confused why such a long-sustained movement would be now re-imagined as this like big conspiracy with these nefarious actors that are in a room with meetings and coordinating.

TFSR: So how have the request for speedy trial been approached by defendants? As I understand a few folks have have applied for it? And as you say, it's a personal and political decision. How's the court dealt with these requests? And is there an extension request filed? Is there an ability for folks that haven't had it successfully applied yet to actually make that choice?

Jewel: The request, as you said, it's very personal, very political. You know, the National Lawyers Guild doesn't represent anyone, but rather is providing resources, providing information, tools to make decisions, really. And that's something that I've been very happy to do and provide a lot of information and a lot of clarification. So these decisions have been made individually with their own individual attorneys. And to my knowledge, only one has successfully demanded for speedy trial—Ayla King, who is, "on trial" right now. Even though it's on pause, it seems the jury has been selected. And that trial will start in a couple of weeks in January 2024. What happened is that I know of at least another co-defendant who tried to file for speedy trial demanded it without an attorney. And the judge denied it, refused it, because the statute also has a lot of technical requirements. Like the paper has to say this, it has to say that, it has to be filed at this day, in this way, given to

the AG in this way. There's a lot of technical requirements that I believe the judge found an error and then was able to refuse it to at least one co-defendant. I'm not sure if other co-defendants have demanded it formally. But there is this motion filed to extend the speedy trial deadline.

One of the most recent motions to extend was filed by Victor Puertas who's still in ICE custody. Victor was arrested in the March Music Festival, falsely charged with domestic terrorism, and then because of his immigration status was transferred to Stewart Detention Center in Georgia. And so he's actually been in Stewart for a couple of months now after being released from DeKalb County on a bond. And then he was charged with RICO. And he actually just got an attorney to appear on his case, I believe, a week or two ago. His attorney's now demanding for speedy trial because now he can. Now Victor has a lawyer, so he can, and it's still left up in the air if the judge will consider it, if the judge will allow an extension of speedy trial. It's hard to see that being decided until [the judge] experiences the first trial. Maybe after witnessing the first RICO trial she could say "Alright, well, maybe we can have [this happen] more quickly," right? Or she could say something like "No, you should have done this before. The law is clear. I'm not going to make exceptions." So the extension for this deadline has been filed, it hasn't been decided on. But in situations especially like Victor's—who was in ICE custody when the RICO charge came out and didn't even learn about it until word of mouth, "Oh, yeah, I saw your name on the indictment." He was never given a copy of [the indictment] until he was brought to court weeks later after everyone else. So you know, that is a situation where it's like "Okay, well, he didn't have the opportunity to bring up this... So he should have now." There's a similar argument for the other co-defendants too that they didn't find out [that] they were indicted. They didn't get the indictment in the mail. It was all through word of mouth, it was through the media. They saw their name on a document that got shared with them through their networks.

So there is this argument [that] they didn't get enough notice to even know that they had to be demanding for speedy trial. And then there was also the other issue in Fulton County, Georgia, that the public defender's office and the conflict attorneys, where you get an attorney appointed, are extremely overburdened. So there were a lot of defendants who showed up to the RICO arraignment, where they pled not guilty. They said they're not guilty without a lawyer and without a public defender, without appointed counsel. And so to expect someone to file something, to know the law, is really crazy. Hopefully the deadline does get extended so that more people have the opportunity to make that decision. Right now, most people can't even make it because they're not allowed to, it's too late.

TFSR: Was there anything else? I mean, we could talk about this for a while, and there's a lot of detail, and you're obviously very knowledgeable about it. Was there anything that I forgot to ask about that you'd like to address that would help kind of tie this up for the audience?

Jewel: I think it's important to remember in the decision making in this moment, especially in in this situation in Atlanta, that there's a lot of people, a lot of organizations that are actively, have been actively, helping. The state and the mainstream media wants it to seem that it's these vandals and rebels, and that they're just doing whatever they want. But there are so many people and organizations supporting and ready to show up for people like Ayla, who demanded speedy trial. Those include: the National Lawyers Guild, which I'm a part of; the CLDC based in Oregon; the Southern Center for Human Rights that stepped up to get attorneys for people; Center for Constitutional Rights has been helping with research. And then even professors at different universities in Georgia have been giving their brain power to help. So there's a lot of people who care and who are supporting, and not to mention the extremely powerful, vibrant jail support that Atlanta has, that has had for years now. Then there's all these volunteers and paid staff members whose jobs have become to help people going through these cases, through state repression. So, I do want to highlight that people aren't alone and that there are others on the sidelines ready to help. A lot of the times, it's just asking for it or tapping in to the resources. I will shout out the National Lawyers Mass Defense Program as a resource, at least to get connected.

So, that's something that I want to end on, maybe on a more positive note, that making a decision like demanding speedy trial and going to trial can be scary, can be politically risky, personally risky, but there is a whole family, a whole community of people who will sustain someone who makes that decision if it's done right and it's done [with movement knowledge]. So, I just want to uplift that [point], too.

TFSR: Cool. Thank you very much for the conversation and for the work that you're doing.

Jewel: Of course, thank you for having me.

### **ACPC MATT ON JURY SELECTION**

Silver: So we're here with Matt from Atlanta Community Press Collective. My name is Silver, and I'm going to be interviewing Matt about the pre-trial hearings and jury selection for the Ayla King trial that started last week. We'll get more into all those details through the interview. But I just want to go ahead and get Matt to introduce himself, and we'll get started with the interview.

**Matt:** Hey, I'm Matt. I'm with the Atlanta Community Press Collective, a non-profit abolitionist news outlet in Atlanta, Georgia. We've been operating for a couple years, but we've largely came into prominence around the Cop City project. We were the ones who discovered that Cop City was actually going to cost more than twice what was promised initially. And, you know, we've been following along with both the domestic terrorism and the RICO defendants since the beginning. So Cop City is definitely our main focus area. But as time progresses, we are continuing to expand into other criminal and social justice related areas.

Silver: Great. Yes, y'alls reporting has been a breath of fresh air, even though there has been a great amount of autonomous news reporting, and especially from defendants or and just really participants themselves in the movement. As someone who's been locally in Atlanta for a while it's been really nice to know that there's like one solid abolitionist news org that's gonna report... And not just kind of the normal propaganda lines that are important for every movement, but actually dig as deep as y'all are able to in time. So we really appreciate the kind of balance between professionalism, or like intentionality, with your journalism and the fact that you're comrades, and I think that's pretty cool.

**Matt:** We definitely take, I think, unique approach into how we do anarchism and abolitionism. And, you know, we don't really talk about it—we don't say like, this is a conclusion that you should draw—we just give all the information that leads us to the conclusion that anarchism and abolition is the right way forward, or, you know, a better way forward at the very least. And that, I think, has played a role in in how we've taken hold in the Atlanta news scene.

Silver: Definitely. Have y'all had a chance to get your teeth cut on any other cases before this? Have you ever reported this closely from a courtroom before?

**Matt:** I've been to a couple bail hearings for some of the other defendants, most notably the three who were arrested for flyering up in Cartersville, Bartow County, Georgia, back over the summer, so it was that their bail hearing. But this is the first time that I will have been reporting from an actual trial. This was my first jury selection, I'm sure like [for] a lot of people. And you know, I have a bit of experience live-tweeting things. I've spent the last, I guess, year and a half tweeting our city council meetings. So I've got a general sense of good things to pick up and do. But this will be the first application in a courtroom of that.

Silver: Yes, it's definitely been interesting to be seated in jury selection and just watch everyone just take such incredible care with their notes and to just not want to miss a thing. And we kind of got lucky that it was only a day and a half in terms of the amount of information. But y'all were able to really synthesize a lot of information that first day.

Before I get too into that, because so much happened in those few hours. In a lot of ways, even though it's easy to sum up as though it was just some jury selection. But before we kind of get into the details of Ayla's case, and we talk about speedy trial, and we talk about RICO, we talk about just what it's like to be in a courtroom, is there anything that y'all have come up with as a media collective, since you are, you know, open and out as anarchists... Did y'all have any meetings before court stuff started getting going about how you wanted to report on the case or like how you wanted to approach kind of the balance between in-depth journalism and like the minute-by-minute live tweet?

**Matt:** We had a lot of them. So we have a weekly meeting (which is actually what I'm doing after this) where we discuss a lot of these things. So we haven't really talked about like a trial in particular, but we have had conversations about circumstances in which, you know, what we want to focus on what we think is important to draw. So kind of applying those lenses that we typically hold when we do live coverage. You know, we're not just repeating the state line. We are, in context where is necessary, supporting challenging power, not supporting power in in our live tweet coverage. So that's just the kind of guiding model that we have.

Silver: I guess, before even the shenanigans that happened on on Monday, I feel like (and you might have a better timeline) we kind of started to have some drama between the courts and press earlier on. We'll talk about the gag order that judge Adams put on, or that maybe the prosecution requested it, though [Judge] James approved it actually on this case, specifically for the defendant themselves... But before that, there was a lot of confusion a

few weeks ago in one of the motions hearings about what it meant for the media to be around while they ruled on the motion to seal Tortuguita's diary. And I was wondering if you had any perspective... not even trying to explain it just legally. But what do you think was going on there? There's this moment where the Atlanta Journal Constitution, I think, on the front cover had an image of Tortuguita's diary. It starts getting passed around in the media, sensationalized and then there's a motion to seal that that comes from the defense. But yeah, would you be into talking a little bit about that?

**Matt:** Yeah, certainly. So the way in which the directive was released, it was released in a motion, which enabled the public to see it immediately. So there wasn't an opportunity granted to the defense to try to seal it beforehand. So it went relatively unnoticed for a few days. We were able to catch it when it went up. And we had been having conversations about it, talking about if this gets out how are we going to cover it.

And then, I think, Michael Schwartz made a motion or filed a motion to seal it. And that's what caused everybody to pick up on the fact that this has happened. So then there were four days where it was basically just open season and everyone could read it. My understanding from a defense attorney's perspective is that there's a heavy bar that the state would have to reach in order to bring this up as actual evidence against the defendants. But what they are able to do, and have in some way successfully done in the way that they released this, is they've engaged in a little bit of public courtroom. The AJC editorial's like putting out some of the worst—I would say that has scare quotes...

#### Silver: Or actually just worst.

Matt: Yeah, in their minds, what are the worst parts of the journal? So there was so much inspiration to be read in it that didn't get highlighted and didn't get coded. So it was a seemingly intentional move by the state. John Ballard, the Deputy Attorney General, who's prosecuting this this case, certainly from what I'm told from defense attorneys, did a, "Oh, no, that that wasn't my intent. I, of course, would never do that." And the court judge, Kimberly Esmond Adams was not having it. And said, "Don't let this happen again," essentially. But the damage had already largely been done.

Silver: It's interesting, too, because as we have experienced this week with some of the media ban in the courtroom around allegedly securing the safety of jurors or not tainting your jurors on this stuff... you have this major, huge release right before jury selection of this diary. That's one of the ways in which the state is able to sometimes position itself and leak certain things and then kind of do this "Oops, sorry, we didn't mean to" thing.

Whereas, I guess one thing I'm interested in, and for context for the audience... So it kind of goes, there's the motion to seal Tort's diary, which

in effect does go through, correct?

Matt: Yes.

Silver: And then during that motion in the ruling, the defense actually asked media to step out during that. Could you just touch on that briefly?

**Matt:** Yeah, it's part of desire to combat how widespread this is. So not wanting to highlight even the battle itself about sealing it to kind of take some of the air out of how widely this spread is my understanding of why defense attorneys did that. We, of course, have a lawyer. We chose not to contact our lawyer to make a statement, because it was the defense who who asked for this. If it had been the prosecution, if it had been the judge, then we certainly would have called our attorneys, but we decided that we would go with it and learn about it secondhand from our defense attorney contacts.

Silver: Okay, that's kind of what I thought. It's basically a sign of respect that let's not even have this argument about their diary becoming spectacle in this moment.

Matt: Yes.

Silver: Okay. Thanks for that clarification. So the next Court Theater between the prosecution and the defense is that the week before Ayla was set to appear, which was last Monday, there's a gag order. Was that right? That comes out. So how did how does that work?

**Matt:** So there was a gag order issued against both Ayla and attorneys on both sides. The Attorney General's office isn't allowed to say anything about the case right now. Neither is Ayla, and neither is Ayla's attorney. So this kind of mum is the word by necessity per Judge Adams order. It's not unexpected. The fact that it is applying to both sides is slightly surprising to me. But this wasn't incredibly surprising that there there was this gag order.

My question is, you know, will there be a gag order when the remaining 60 go to trial? In which case, that is a number of people who will be silenced. And I'm sure there are more attorneys in that case, and they might fight it, I don't know. But that is something to to be on the watch for.

Silver: Yeah. I feel like a lot of the work for movement media is then to... When you have a defendant and a defense that can't speak for themselves to the media, there's a lot of piecing together that we have to do to figure out... We already have, and I don't mean to say we as though you and I necessarily share every perspective. In terms of the choices that anarchist and autonomous media has made to cover this and say from the outright, "We're

against Cop City. We're against a world that needs Cop City. We'll be making media from that place," there's still choices about how you cover any trial any case, and when you can't check in with the person who it directly most impacts, which is something, we like to do, I think. You know, I think one of the ways that autonomous and anarchists media differs from corporate media is just that things should come from on the ground. They should come from the people of most experienced and impacted by the situation.

In lieu of us not being able to communicate directly with a Ayla or their support team or defense, what are some of the things that feel important to you moving forward, to highlight? How does the gag order impact how you go move forward?

**Matt:** It certainly impacts how we would have moved forward. You know, we would have reached out to Suri [Surinder Chadha Jimenez], Ayla's attorney, for comments. We would have probably reached out to Ayla, as well, depending on what the situation called for. And so we can't do that at this point.

As far as the presentation of our coverage goes, we are always considering what the needs of the movement are essentially, the movement at large, not just the movement against Cop City, but the general movement for justice. And so we will still be considering that. We obviously lose a little bit of our check system where, like you said, we can't go and check to see either if this is accurate to what they are experiencing or if this isn't somehow going to be harmful to what they're going through. So it does require an extra layer of caution on our end in our internal conversations to try to make sure that we are navigating the situation as well as possible.

Silver: So, we covered the gag order, we covered some of the preemptive moves from the state to limit media's coverage of this, both from the defense honestly and from from the prosecution, I should say.

What was it like when you got to court Monday as as a member of the press, but specifically as the type of member the press that you are?

Matt: In order to record the proceedings in any way, you have to file a rule 22 motion in the state of Georgia. And I had filed a rule 22 motion for myself and ACPC the Tuesday prior. Judge Adams wants things five days in advance, so I filed in time to make sure that happened. And then we arrived to court, I think 30 minutes before it started, and were informed by the New York Times correspondent here, Sean Keenan, that media wasn't going to be allowed in. And then of course, the Guardian's correspondent showed up after that. So, it's very surreal experience when you're with correspondents from two of the most powerful newspapers in the entire world, and they are being shut out as well.

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I called our attorney to have a conversation and see what our options were. She was considering reaching out to even the AJC's attorney so that we could file something together. If they weren't going to allow us at least the overflow access. Judge Adams had said at the very first hearing that she was not interested in changing courtrooms. This is her courtroom, this is her little fiefdom, and she is familiar with it. She knows every nook and cranny of it, and she has no desire to move out of this courtroom. So this was always the concern as well: you have 61 defendants that cannot fit in this room at the same time with their attorneys, how are we going to do this?

So I wasn't terribly surprised that we weren't allowed in the room itself during jury selection. Given the number of jurors that were in the pool. What was surprising was that it didn't seem like that had been prepared for with the overflow room. Court, I believe was scheduled to get started at 9:30 or something like that. I can't remember. I don't believe we got started until 12 or something, so much later than than we originally anticipated, and that was largely while they were dealing with the technical side of things. We probably would have actually gotten through all of the individual juror questions on the first day had things started on time, but at the end of the day, nothing happened. We missed nothing by not being in the room. There's a certain sense of being able to read the body language of people in order to understand more of the context of what's happening, and so we we lost out on that, but we were able to hear almost everything and were able to report pretty accurately what was going.

**Silver:** Monday was after really three hours of kind of Boomer mishandling of technology. Then finally, we also had a little bit of a surprise where no motions or demurrers were heard, and they went straight into jury selection. Is that normal that you're aware of, that they can kind of just decide on the order of that?

Matt: You know, judges are largely able to do a lot of whatever they would like to do. I had expected to hear motions. And, you know, there there was a slew of motions that were filed by Suri and also the Attorney General leading up to Monday. And so I accepted that we would be hearing those arguments. It appears that we will not be hearing those arguments until the middle of January at this point. But some of the impetus for not doing that was the fact that there were 60 jurors that were just going to be sat there. And I believe judge Adams wanted to get them in and get them out as quickly as possible. I will say that I have a good faith belief in that, at least. So yeah, it was a little surprising that we didn't hear any motions or demurrers, but we got the jury selection done relatively quickly, for all things considered.

**Silver:** Yeah, event shockingly quickly, actually.

Matt: Yeah, one of the things that you give up in the speedy trial is an ability to object to the juror pool in general. Of course, you can in the initial stage do some striking. So there's less going back and forth about the jury. The YSL racketeering case that's also being prosecuted in Fulton County, that jury selection went on...

**Silver:** For 10 months, I think? [laughs]

Matt: Right, under a year. So we may see that happen in the in the actual RICO trial for the rest of these defendants. But it was not expected that it would take quite that long. A number of defendants had filed for a speedy trial deadline extension, and which is not to my knowledge has not been denied at this point. So there may be more speedy trials down the line. Ayla King was the only defendant who filed before the deadline, which is why we're having this now. And during the original hearing, Judge Adams asked Deputy AG Fowler how long he believed it would take to prosecute one case, and he said "two weeks." So initially, we were set to go from December 11 through December 29, so a little over two weeks, but that has now been moved back. And we are starting on January 10.

**Silver:** A little a little backed up, but uh, still not the summer. So you know, we have a segment coming either before after, depending on how we piece together this episode, with an attorney who has some experience a speedy trial. So we'll get to kind of dig into that strategy, that the defense...

#### Matt: Right, because I'm NOT a lawyer...

**Silver:** Yeah. It's one of those things that even lawyers, if they've never done it before... I even had a friend in law school say, "I don't even remember that course in law school." You know, it's so underutilized. So, I think Ayla is so brave to do this, I think they may be the youngest defendant, or they're one of the youngest defendants. We know they're from out-of-state, and the fact that they are just willing to go for it and say, "Show me your cards, what do you got?" is pretty remarkable.

Matt: It's certainly a great strategy. And there are definitely some benefits. The state doesn't have quite the same amount of time to prepare its arguments in this case. And there was, I believe, also a strategy about getting a number of defendants to file for speedy trial motions in order to make the state work that much harder and potentially miss something or poorly form an argument or whatever to play out. So, it remains to be seen if we get the rest of the defendants who wanted the The Final Straw Radio / Stop Cop City Rico Updates

speedy trial. We could see that happen, but I'm not holding my breath that that'll happen that that'll happen.

Silver: But still many motions and demurrers that the defense has worked on show the importance of collective defense, that one of the lawyers might be really seasoned, has been around a long time, and is like, "Hey, I know how to do speedy trial," and another one might be more prepared to do different kinds of motions. So we're definitely hoping to see more lawyers work together as more defendants are able to push forward their desire for collective defense. I [hope] we'll see a lot of continued cooperation.

Matt: I'd certainly love to see January 20 be the shining guidestar here for attorneys to understand the importance of collective defense. But attorneys are generally loath to try new things. So there might be a little bit of a lag period between the initial desire just to do one thing, and then, you know, switch it up and actually engage in collective defense.

Silver: Well, let's dig into Monday. So a lot of jury selection... I kind of forgot how riveting jury selection actually is. It's been a long time since I've been around for one.

It is very exposing. You know, anyone actually could walk into the overflow room and listen. We couldn't see the jurors faces, but they get asked some pretty personal questions that are ultimately recorded and somewhat public information. But one of the things that I forgot until I was really back in it... and I think your tweets, your coverage of the day did a great job showing some of where the state is going with their questioning and narrative, and maybe some of the areas that the defense and collective defense and that we as a movement have in return.

There's a few of your specific kind of lines and tweets I want to highlight, but of all of the information you had to go through listening to, all of the prosecutorial questions for the jury than the defenses and then the individual interviews that started to happen, what were some of the themes you were picking up on? Like, let's start with prosecution: Where were they going with their questioning? Like, what do you think they were trying to elicit out of the jurors?

Matt: There was bit of testifying that was happening on both sides, from the attorneys to the jury pool. Fowler largely asked about protests and prior protests experience and key pointed question. I think it was something like 30 people had either protested themselves or had a close friend or family member who had protested, right about half the jury pool. Fallor asked each of them, "Did that protest turn violent? Did you leave?" Which then the defense attorney was like, "Did you have any control over anything that happened? Were you there protesting, and then other things happen?" So both sides were kind of playing that
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same framing game that I think is going to be at the core of a lot of this.

So far, we've seen no evidence presented against Ayla themself. So it largely, and I believe even Fowler said one of the two most important things is the mob, so just being there itself is going to be on trial here. You know, how related that is to any acts that occurred while you are present, is largely what I expect the state to argue for and the defense to argue against.

**Silver:** Someone crunched some numbers from your reporting. Because I'm guessing you've been in Atlanta a while, you've been reporting on a lot of wide ranging issues, not just on Cop City, but you've seen this movement from its kind of nascent state. And someone crunched, from listening into the live tweets, that it started with 70 jurors... And that means that that's a random selection of citizens in Fulton County who are registered to vote—it's kind of how jury selection starts...

Matt: There were 60. We were told 70—that was a rumor—but the actual number was 60. They skipped the numbers. There was a juror 61, so it got confusing.

Silver: These are gonna be a little skewed, but I'm still presenting them as general numbers to see if you are you surprised and what do you think about it. Based on the questions, especially of prosecution, 90% are familiar with Cop City, specifically, while 20% are familiar with Defend The Atlanta Forest. 20% had engaged in some form of protest, and 40% had friends or family engaged in the protest.

I don't know. Are those numbers interesting to you, or did you did you see anything as you were recording the specific ways that people had either heard or had not heard of the project and how the prosecution was trying to basically elicit who is sympathetic here and what are we working with in a jury pool? Like how many of y'all are so familiar with this that you've already been following protest footage?

Matt: Yeah, there were two very interesting questions that were posed to the jury pool where we can kind of read to the 95% of people who are familiar with Cop City. That I think is accurate. I have a total of seven jurors in my notes who had never heard of or claimed to have never heard of Cop City.

But another question that was asked was, "Who has strong feelings one way or another about Cop City?" And I think this is something like 12 jurors said that they have strong feelings. The next question that was asked was "Who's protested in the past," and those two groups largely differ. There's some overlap. So we can kind of get a sense of this jury pool, and it's natural for jury pools to skew more conservative. You tend to be dismissed if you can't afford to be in a jury pool,
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which automatically gets rid of a significant portion of the population who was not conservative. So that was a very notable thing to me. It was: Okay, this is kind of probably representative of what we can expect for the jury pool itself. There are people who protested, but the ones who feel very strongly about Cop City largely have not. That was the take away. I actually don't think I even live-tweeted that. I just sat in it and was trying to catch up with everything that was happening because they were going through these questions so quickly.

Silver: What did you think about the fact that none had heard of an anarchist before? [laughs]

Matt: You know, I think that juror 1 knows anything about anarchy but knows no anarchists. It's very interesting. I, of course, have a very skewed sense of life, and I spend more time around people who self-identify as an anarchists than I'm sure most people ever will. But it was surprising that in a room of 60 people in which this project is so germane to our everyday life, it is weird. It is honestly inescapable if you've been in the city for a while now. There's Stop Cop City graffiti everywhere. So it's hard to imagine that nobody has met an anarchist in that room. But there's a difference in lives, I would say.

There's probably not many anarchists in Buckhead. Since this is Fulton County, this is not just the city of Atlanta, and a number of these jurors identified as being from Alpharetta, being from Roswell, like further up in the suburban part of Fulton County. So that part is not surprising. But you know, I know there are anarchists on the west side. So, that was a bit surprising.

Silver: I feel like we could have a whole fun ideological conversation about that in itself. Is there some success in that that this hasn't been overly branded as an anarchist struggle? Is it also because domestic terrorism has been the main word the state has thrown around versus, like, after J20 we saw anarchists came back in the media as a pejorative and we had anarchy come back in the media... We had the one juror who said "I associate January 6 with anarchy" in their individual interview. And so I think it just is also a reminder of the continual kind of the lack of context that so many people have for what that word means. I both laughed and was kind of like "Huh, what do I think about this?"

Well, another thing that I don't know if you saw—one of my favorite actual maybe political stances from one of the jurors was when they were further questioned in the interview about why they were against Cop City, or questioned about it, they just said, "I don't see the point." [laughs] And I kind of loved that too, about how we often focus on trying to drill in about how negative this thing's going to be and how horrible. It reminded me of the position that is really important to try and kind of capture, some of the general population that I've seen in my workplace, which is just people being The Final Straw Radio / Stop Cop City Rico Updates 22 of 24 like, "This is just a crazy waste of money. Like what I don't really understand, don't they already have training, like, what are they going to do with it?" And of course, it's been necessary to make deeper connections in that, but it reminded me that that's not a neutral point. That juror said, "I'm against Cop City because I don't see the point of it. And this is a huge amount of resources, or I don't think it's going to change anything." And so that also gave me some hope. There's jurors who might not have a strong political stance on the project, but at the end of the day they might see this person who went to a music festival and came out with these charges as a part of the continuation of excessive spending, excessive focus on law and order, that the city is really in a moment of kind of a Giuliani-level, post-2020, trying to just save the actual functioning state in itself. So I don't know. I know, I'm at a little bit of a tangent, but I just kind of wanted to open up that space.

Matt: No, that's a great point. And in talking to the defendants, and having these pre-interviews, and in some of the interviews we've done so far, there's always this sense that the state will create its own means of failure. And by their overstep and their overreach and the arrest and charge of so many people with domestic terrorism. What we've heard many times from from defendants is like, "I actually wasn't like that down with things before, but you put me in this corner. So like, now I'm with it." So by doubling down, and continuously doubling down and this is what we've seen, the entire way through this project—it's continuing to double down on what we've done in saying, "Yes, well, we messed up before, but we're still going to keep doing what we're doing. But we're going to do it better, I promise." And then something else happens and something else happens. And every time that happens, there are more people who come to flock up to the banner of [Stop] Cop City or even just become neutral to it. And apathetic. And, you know, the other side needs support, the state needs support for this project. It's not going to succeed if there is no general public support. So even moving someone from, "Well, yeah, you know, I believe police needs a new training center" to "I don't really know anymore" is I think a big step.

I will say I would love to see the project itself on trial in these trials. I know that Judge Adams does not want to see that on trial. I know that the defense does not want to see that. And I don't think we'll quite get into that level. But you know, there's always that subtext in what's happening, that we can expect.

**Silver:** Well, maybe it's just like one or two more questions before I let you go. I know you're really busy working on projects that are continuing to help give defendants a voice in this process that I'm sure we'll see down the line.

But in the end, we weren't allowed to see video or any photographs of the jurors, time will tell how media coverage will look come January 10, when The Final Straw Radio / Stop Cop City Rico Updates

Ayla is going to report back back and we're going to hear opening arguments. And I guess the two kind of final things I was interested in is this comment that Judge Adams made on Tuesday when we had a similar situation when we got to court. Turns out they were still saying, "Overflow room only. We'll have the live stream." I think there was tech difficulties, also started late. And then at one point when I think someone addressed [Judge] Adams about the lack of media on Tuesday. She made this comment that was like, "Well, my doors aren't locked. The courtroom is open." What was that about? I know that maybe ACPC wasn't able to be there in that moment, but did you hear about this?

Matt: There was someone from ACPC who was there. Sam, one of our reporters, was there. I had some other things I had to do on Tuesdays. They did live-tweet about that.

It's certainly odd. At the beginning of the day there were 36 jurors that still needed to have their individual questioning, and so that was taking up a large amount of the room. I do think that there was a bit of Judge Adams not wanting, let's say, supporters of defendants to be in the room and to see the jury pool. That really... to what effect? All you have to do is hang out outside of the courtroom, and you see the jury pool walking in and out. So I don't know if it's ultimately effective. But I do think that that was likely playing at least partially into the courtroom being "open," but not really.

**Silver:** Gotcha.

Finally, I saw that in the end, we were allowed to know that the panel of 14 Jurors included (and this is how the court describes them): 4 white women; 4 Black women; 3 Black men; 1 white man; 1 Asian woman; 1 woman of unknown race. And so far, that's all we've really been kind of been notified about the composition of the jury. And I was talking to a friend on the way here about this concept of a jury of your peers. And something that I never really realized was that, obviously, because of the history of jury trials and the court system in the US, I've mostly paid attention to how jury selection is wielded vis-a-vie white supremacy to make sure that oftentimes Black and brown and Indigenous defendants do not get actually get a jury of their peers.

But I actually was thinking in this case about how Ayla is 19. And the defense actually did ask some questions that kind of got to some things around the family, like different roles that people have in life, that I was kind of wondering, what about a 19 year old? Is having a panel of potentially 10 parents and grandparents a jury of your peers?

Matt: Yeah, that was actually a factor of at least the state's questioning that was very notable. Fowler asked "anyone with kids, how old are your kids," and specifically, "how old is your daughter." And so the implied disqualifier there would be if you have a daughter that's around 18 or 19, or very young and in college, you would more likely see Ayla as your The Final Straw Radio / Stop Cop City Rico Updates

own child or kin to your own child. So yeah, I think I need to go back and look at my notes. I took detailed notes on how all of the jurors answered their individual questioning, so that I can kind of look and see who does have some of that biographical data that, you know, might end up swaying someone one way or the other. But that was definitely at play in the state's questioning.

**Silver:** I think that's because it can go both ways. I think the state can think about how potentially tugging on these heartstrings of the jurors around the parent role and like the "misled youth" or something, some bullshit like that, could make them be more empathetic or lenient. But it could also work the other way—you can have ways in which the state over-focusing on on that can... It's kind of like what we often find with younger people caught up in the criminal justice system, which is like, "Okay, so you're old enough to be having to travel across the country to show up to court basically alone and not have any support in the courtroom." But yet, if it behooves the state [they] will try to make you look younger than you are, [they]'ll try to make you look older than you are. There's just this way in which age actually does function really intensely.

I think given the context of this trial, it's going to be interesting to see how age plays out between the defense and prosecution. But yeah, it was just something I was thinking about. I mean, if I was on trial, I'd want to look up and see a couple people my age, you know? And I think we focus so much on other certain identity forms, it's often rarely ever said, the ages of jurors. And that was interesting to me.

But I guess in closing, we've had you for so long, and thank you for being so generous. Anything that we didn't touch on that you want to shout out, any projects down coming down the pipeline?

Matt: I think I mentioned earlier that we're doing a series with the RICO defendants called In Their Words. So we are reaching out to them, we're going to where they live, to really get to know who they are and what their lives are [like]. We're largely not talking about the facts of the case, but who these people are. So I'm actually in New York right now to film another episode of that tomorrow, but we have our first episode out with Priscilla Grim, one of the March 5th defendants, and then our second episode with Jamie Marsicano, another one of the March 5th defendants, should be out by the end of this year, and then third episode with Charley Tennenbaum sometime in the middle of January.

**Silver:** Very exciting. I can't wait to see those. Well, thank you so much.



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